

THE MELFORD RURAL DISTRICT

IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF WEST SUFFOLK.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1920.

(Pursuant to the Regulations of the Local Government Board.)

Population (1911) 12791. (1920) 11822. Area, 49850 acres.

Number of parishes 22, 1 an ecclesiastical one only (Leavenheath).

Number of Inhabited Houses, 3219. Number of persons per house, 3.4.

Physical features of the District surface are flat and undulating, averaging 200 to 300 feet O.D. Geological formation, chalk with overlying beds of brick earth, drift sands and gravels, and boulder clay, the latter often 100 feet thick. Occupation of the inhabitants, chiefly agricultural.

The following vital statistics have been compiled from the monthly returns sent to me from the Registrar General and the different Registrars in the district :—

THE BIRTHS.

The number of births registered during the year was **266**, equivalent to a birth-rate of **22.5** per 1000 of the population. The births and birth-rates in this District during the last eight years were :—

	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.	1919.	1920.
Births	244	222	233	213	148	176	191	266
Birth rate ...	18.9	17.2	18.2	16.6	13.8	16.4	16.1	22.5

Birth rate for England and Wales, 25.4.

THE DEATHS.

The total deaths registered in the district number **142**. Deducting those of persons not belonging to the district, and adding those of persons belonging to it who have died elsewhere, the number of deaths of residents is **163**. These include 20 who died in the Sudbury Union Infirmary, and 3 who died in St. Leonard's Hospital. This is equivalent to a death rate of **13.7** per thousand of population.

The deaths and death rates of the last eight years were :—

	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.	1919.	1920.
Deaths registered.....	157	175	195	210	161	160	174	142
Deaths belonging to the District	174	189	212	198	160	181	185	163
Death rate.....	13.5	14.6	16.4	15.4	14.9	16.5	16.2	13.7

Death rate for England and Wales, 12.4.

The following table shows the relative age mortality during the year amongst residents.

Deaths—

Under 1 year.	1 to 2 years.	2 to 5 years.	5 to 15 years.	15 to 25 years.	25 to 45 years.	45 to 65 years.	over 65 years.
19	3	0	4	12	18	28	79

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

The deaths registered of children under one year number **19**. Of these 4 only were due to premature birth, 1 to jaundice of the new born; the others were due to preventable conditions.

Much help is given by District Nurses in several parishes in trying to prevent this infantile mortality. The need for more District Nurses is urgent.

The infant mortality for the last eight years was :—

	1913.	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.	1919.	1920.
Death of children under one year	15	15	21	11	13	10	10	19
Rate per 1000 of births registered	65.6	67.5	90.1	51.6	87.8	56.7	52.3	71.4

Infant mortality for England and Wales, 80.

GENERAL MORTALITY.

Among the deaths registered were cancer 21, tuberculosis 17, organic heart disease chiefly among old people 32, bronchitis 13, accidents 2.

The number of deaths from tuberculosis shows an increase.

Sanitary Circumstances of the District.

WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply of the District is entirely derived from wells and springs. Many of the wells go down into the chalk formation, others get a good supply from springs in the interglacial gravels of the boulder clays.

There are 23 public wells which supply most of the villages in the District. The water from these has been at various times analysed and found to be pure, and the supply is ample. There are numerous private wells; 17 new ones were sunk this year. The samples of water taken for analysis numbered 49. The water from 20 wells found unfit for domestic use. In 11 cases this was remedied by cleansing the well or alteration of the drainage of the house, in 7 cases a new well was sunk, 2 are still under investigation.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

There is no pollution of streams in the district. Any sewerage which finds its way into the river is well oxidised.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

The privy cesspit system, which is gradually being replaced by the pail system, is the general method of dealing with excremental refuse, which is satisfactorily disposed of on the garden or allotment ground. The approximate number of cesspit privies is 1312, pail closets 1277, and water closets 243. Sewers and connected house drains exist in the larger villages, and only are used for slop and storm water; this diluted sewerage passes into open ditches, where it becomes oxidised, so that where in some cases it ultimately flows into the river, it is free from pollution. During the year 9 privies were converted into pail closets. The periodic cleaning of ditches into which sewage enters were 4 in Melford, and 2 in Nayland.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF DISTRICT.

Systematic as well as general inspections have been made throughout the district, and the house-to-house inspection has been continued, 767 houses have been inspected this year.

Below is a tabular statement of the sanitary work done in each parish during the year by the Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. G. F. Rampling, who has carried out his work with great diligence and success.

	Acton.	Alpheton.	Assington.	Boxted.	Bures St. Mary.	St. Bartholomew.	Cavendish	Chilton.	Gt. Cornard.	Lt. Cornard.	Hartest.	Hawkedon.	Lawshall.	Leavenheath.	Melford.	Nayland with Wissington.	Newton.	Shimpling.	Somerton.	Stoke-by-Nayland.	Stanstead.	Gt. Waldingfield.	Lt. Waldingfield.	TOTAL.
Complaints received	1	2	1	...	4	...	5	2	4	5	...	1	3	1	7	4	1	2	...	3	5	1	...	52
Nuisances detected	5	8	7	3	20	...	18	6	15	10	11	3	15	4	46	12	9	6	2	9	8	5	2	224
Nuisances abated by Statutory Notice served	...	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	6	...	...	15
Nuisances abated without notice served	5	7	6	3	14	...	17	6	15	8	11	2	13	4	46	12	9	6	2	6	2	5	2	201
Nuisances being dealt with	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	2	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Offensive accumulations removed	3	1	...	...	10	...	4	1	6	1	3	...	2	2	11	2	2	3	...	2	4	1	1	59
Houses newly erected ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Houses in course of erection ...	14	8	...	...	4	...	4	...	...	8	8	...	20	...	28	8	10	...	...	8	8	...	...	128
Houses disinfected	6	...	2	...	1	...	2	2	4	1	2	...	1	...	5	3	2	...	...	2	2	1	1	37
Filthy houses cleansed ... ..	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Houses overcrowded (abated)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Schools inspected	1	1	1	...	1	...	2	...	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	...	1	1	1	1	22
Schools disinfected	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	2
Wells (new) ... ..	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	3	1	...	...	...	2	1	4	1	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	17
Wells (cleaned out, deepened, etc.)	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	1	3	1	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	11
Samples of water taken for analysis	2	...	1	...	10	...	2	10	3	...	...	4	2	8	8	4	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	49
Privies (new)	1	8	2	...	4	...	4	10	1	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	35
Privies (repaired) ... ..	...	...	...	...	4	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	3	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13
Privies (converted into pail closets)	...	...	...	...	3	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Sewers (repaired, relaid, etc.)...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Ditches cleansed ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	7
Sink pipes disconnected	1	...	...	...	3	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
Drains (new) ... ..	...	8	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	8	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	21
Drains (improved)	1	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	1	...	6	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	15
Drains tested with water ... ..	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17
Slaughter Houses inspected ...	...	...	...	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	2	3	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	14
Dairies and Cowsheds inspected	1	1	1	1	2	...	2	...	1	1	2	...	1	...	6	3	2	2	...	2	1	3	1	33
Dairies and Cowsheds repaired, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	3
Animals improperly kept, removed	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Bakehouses inspected ... ..	...	...	1	...	2	...	3	...	1	1	3	...	...	2	9	3	...	1	...	2	1	...	1	30
Workshops inspected	2	1	1	...	3	...	6	...	2	...	3	...	...	...	12	3	1	1	...	1	1	1	1	39
Outworkers visited	4	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	29	14	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	61
Outworkers' lists received ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Total number of inspections and visits made ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2760
Letters sent out... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	550
House-to-house inspection ...	10	10	...	15	20	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	700	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	767

GEO. F. RAMPLING, M.S.I.A., *Inspector of Nuisances.*

SCAVENGING.

The scavenging scheme in the parish of Long Melford has proved to be most satisfactory, and a great help in maintaining the sanitary condition of the parish. The work comprises the weekly collection of the contents of 390 pail closets, and as required the emptying of cesspits, also the collection of all house refuse; during the year 500 loads were removed. The collections are deposited in pits in arable land outside the parish. The work is done by this Council, under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector, and cost of same is met by a special rate on the parish.

A scavenging scheme also in operation in the parish of Bures St. Mary: 125 pail closets are dealt with weekly, and as required cesspools are emptied, house refuse is also collected. This work is done by contract at a cost of £100, equal to a 10d. rate on the parish. The collections are deposited and used on arable ground.

Premises and Occupations which can be controlled by Bye-laws or Regulations.

LODGING HOUSES.

There are no common lodging houses in the district.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

- (1) Knackers' Yards, 2—one in Lawshall, one in Nayland.
- (2) Catgut Works, 2—one in Great Cornard, one in Little Cornard.

All have been regularly inspected. A nuisance was found to exist at the factory at Great Cornard, arising from lack of sanitary conveniences for female workers. This matter has been put right.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

The factories in the district number 4, viz., in Long Melford, 1 hair weaving and 1 mat making; in Gt. Cornard, 1 mat making and 1 motor radiator works. The workshops number 42. Both the factories and workshops have all been inspected, and have sufficient and suitable sanitary conveniences; where persons of both sexes are employed separate accommodation is provided, in accordance with section 22 of Public Health (Amendment) Act, 1890. No notices have been received from H.M. Inspector of Factories this year. Outworkers periodically visited, 61. Horsehair and tailoring employed at chiefly. In one case Scarlet Fever arose in the house, the child was removed, the workshop and work disinfected. The factor was notified.

SCHOOLS.

Inspection as to the sanitary condition of the 22 Schools in the district has been made, and they were found satisfactory. All have an available supply of good water, though not always on the premises. Each school has a convenient playground. The action taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases is as follows—with regard to scarlet fever, the exclusion of all children from infected houses, and sometimes from infected areas; also the examination of all the children in schools for any signs of desquamation, particularly those who have been lately absent. For measles, whooping cough, and chicken pox, the exclusion of the affected child, also of any younger ones in the affected family, but not necessarily the elder ones. Intimations of diseases among the children have been received from the Masters or Mistresses, and action taken when necessary. The medical inspection of school children is under the County Medical Officer of Health.

The following schools have been closed during year for the reasons stated :—

- (1) Hartest Voluntary School in July for Mumps.
 - (2) Alpheton Bridge St. Voluntary School in August for Chicken Pox.
 - (3) Long Melford Infants' Voluntary School in December for Whooping Cough.
- Acton and Great Waldingfield Schools were disinfected.

FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.

There are 33 dairies and cowsheds on the register, all of which have been frequently inspected. All cows are grass grazed.

Four of the largest cow-keepers send most of their milk to London, passing it through strainers and refrigerators.

The Model Regulations, 1905, are in force.

Milk (Mothers' and Children) Order 1918. No action taken by local authority under this order.

BAKE-HOUSES.

These number 30, and were inspected and their sanitary condition found satisfactory. There are no underground bake-houses.

MEAT SUPPLY.

- I. Inspected by surprise visits. No carcasses found affected. Slaughter houses on the whole quite satisfactory.
 - II. No Public Abattoir is available, and in such a scattered district one would not seem to be necessary. Killing days are known, and periodical visits are paid.
 - III. No action necessary under Public Health Act, 1875.
 - IV. No carcasses condemned for tuberculosis.
- No. of slaughter houses in 1914—20; in January, 1920—14; in December, 1920—14.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

No action was necessary under this Act.

FOOD POISONING.

No cases are known to have arisen in the district.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

SCARLET FEVER. 22 cases.

These may be divided into 2 small epidemics. One caused by the return of a domestic servant from Felixstowe with an unrecognised attack; 13 cases arose from this cause. The other epidemic could not be traced to its origin, but 6 cases arose in a school through a pupil attending whilst suffering from the disease.

DIPHTHERIA. 2 cases not confirmed.

ERYSIPELAS. 3 cases scattered over the district.

MALARIA. 2 cases of military origin.

Diphtheria Antitoxin is held in readiness by me and is promptly used.

Bacteriological aids to diagnosis are provided by the West Suffolk County Council.

NON-NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

MEASLES AND WHOOPING COUGH were prevalent during the year. Both were mild in character. No deaths arose in the district from either disease.

TUBERCULOSIS.

PULMONARY. 21 new cases. Of these 4 were persons who had come into the district already suffering from the disease, and 4 were men who had contracted the disease in the Army, but making an allowance for these cases, this figure is startling.

OTHER FORMS of the disease notified were 2 cases of glandular infection, 1 of spinal disease, and 1 of generalised tuberculosis.

THE TREATMENT of Tuberculosis is under the control of the West Suffolk County Council. The cases notified are reported to the Tuberculosis Officer. The action taken by the local authority is (1) The residence of the cases is inspected, and where found defective the matter is attended to. (2) The house is disinfected after removal to a Sanatorium or after death. One Shelter is available for loan to patients.

The County scheme includes provision of limited Sanatorium treatment and domiciliary treatment, with periodic visits of Health Visitor and Tuberculosis Officer. The need for the provision for more treatment in Sanatoria is urgent. Early cases have to wait a long time for admission, and cases in a highly infective state have to live under conditions which makes infection of others probable.

VENEREAL DISEASE.

This is under the control of the West Suffolk County Council. Free treatment is provided at the following centres:—

1. Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge.
2. East Suffolk and Ipswich Hospital, Ipswich.
3. Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, Norwich.
4. Essex County Hospital, Colchester.

The disease is not very prevalent and the provision made is adequate.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

This is also under the County Council.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

- (1) Staff. One Sanitary Inspector and one pupil.
- (2) Hospital accommodation for Infectious Disease. There is no provision at present. Where conditions were unfavourable for isolation in the home, a number of cases were removed to Colchester Isolation Hospital by arrangement. This, in the few instances when it was done, was a great help. This subject is at present under consideration.
- (3) Local Acts. None.
- (4) Adoptive Acts in force are: Public Health Amendment Act 1890, Parts 1 to 3, Sections 16, 17, 18, 19, Sub-sections 2, 21, 23, 25, 26, 28, 32, 33, 47, 48, 49. Adopted—Feb. 24, 1903. Infectious Diseases Prevention Act 1890: Sections 8, 10, 13, 14, 15. Adopted—Jan. 27, 1903.
- (5) The arrangements for Bacteriological Examination are under the control of the County Council.

HOUSING.

<i>Parish.</i>	<i>Total number of houses.</i>	<i>Number for working class.</i>	<i>New houses.</i>	<i>Population.</i>	<i>New houses proposed under Housing Scheme.</i>
Acton	120	109	—	447	20
Alpheton	57	57	—	188	8
Assington	124	117	—	495	—
Boxted	51	46	—	170	—
Bures St. Mary	202	148	—	799	10
Cavendish	228	203	—	761	20
Chilton	56	48	—	208	—
Great Cornard	291	216	—	1141	—
Great Waldingfield ...	115	108	—	394	8
Hartest	136	125	—	460	10
Hawkedon	48	44	—	193	—
Lawshall	154	142	—	582	20
Little Cornard	81	72	—	269	6
Little Waldingfield ...	75	55	—	251	—
Melford	707	612	1	2594	48
Nayland and Wiston..	254	216	—	1211	16
Newton	92	82	—	248	10
Shimpling	96	94	—	338	8
Somerton	29	20	—	106	—
Stanstead	67	64	—	214	8
Stoke-by-Nayland ...	236	184	—	774	10

In the Parish of Chilton 14 Hutments were erected by the West Suffolk County Council in connection with small holdings. These are not included in above figures.

OVERCROWDING.

There is no great amount of overcrowding, taking air space as a factor, but taking the standard of two persons to one room, there is more than 25 per cent. There were 4 cases of overcrowding dealt with—2 in Melford, 1 in Lawshall, 1 in Gt. Cornard.

FITNESS OF HOUSES.

The general standard of houses in the district is good. The defects which are most marked are :—

- (1) The floor level in many houses is below that of the surrounding ground, making all the rooms very damp.
 - (2) Lack of ventilation.
 - (3) Structural—defective roofs, eaves, gutters, damp walls.
- Under Public Health Act, 51 houses repaired.
Under Housing Act, 3 houses closed.

UNHEALTHY AREAS.

There are none in the district.

BY-LAWS.

There are no Housing By-laws ; this makes it difficult to remedy some nuisances.

APPENDIX.

GENERAL.

Estimated Population...	...	...	...	11822	
General Death Rate	...	...	...	13.7	
Death Rate from Tuberculosis	...	...	...	1.43	
Infantile Mortality	...	...	...	71.4	
Number of Dwelling Houses of all classes	...	...	...	3233	} including County Council Hutments
Number of working-class Dwelling Houses	...	...	...	2976	
Number of new working class houses erected...	...	...	...	1	

UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES.

I. INSPECTION.

- (1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... 2670
- (2) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 ... 767
- (3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... 3
- (4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to above) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... 32

II. REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by Local Authority	20
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III. ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.

A. Proceedings under Section 28 of Housing, Town Planning Act of 1919.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	15
(2) Number of houses which were rendered fit :	
(a) by Owners	9
(b) by Local Authority in default of Owners	6
(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close ...	0

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	0
(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied :	
(a) by Owners	51
(b) by Local Authority in default of Owners	0

C. Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909.

(1) Number of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to the making of a closing order	3
(2) Number of closing orders made	3
(3) Number of dwelling houses in regard to which closing orders were determined on, the houses being made fit for human habitation ...	0
(4) Demolition orders made	0
(5) Number of dwelling houses demolished	0

IV. Number of houses not complying with building bye-laws, erected with consent of Local Authority under Section 25, Housing, Town Planning Act, 1919	0
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V. Staff engaged on housing work—one Housing Officer.	
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R. W. RIX, M.B., F.R.C.S.,
Medical Officer of Health.